



Semantic Loss in Two English Translations of Surah Ya-Sin by Two Translators

(Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to examine the semantic Loss and its causes in two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin by two translators: Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry. Semantic loss focuses on over-translation, under-translation or mistranslation of a source text and can result in partial or complete loss of meaning in the target text. Semantic loss is inevitable while translating from a source language due to the lack of equivalence of some cultural words in the target language. Baker's typology of equivalence (1992) was adopted to identify causes of losses in the two English translations: Equivalence at word level, above word level, Textual, Grammatical and Pragmatic Equivalence. This research is qualitative in nature and is based on Hermeneutics, an interpretative framework of translation studies. The English translations of Surah Ya-Sin were selected from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's work "The Holy Qur'an: Text and Translation" (1938) and Arthur John Arberry's "The Koran Interpreted" (1968). Two language experts were consulted for the present study to understand the meanings of the source text. Moreover Tafsir by Ibn Khathir (2000) was used as a reference book. The analysis of the data revealed frequent partial loss of meaning in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation and complete loss of meaning in Arthur John Arberry's translation. Linguistic deviation from the source text was identified as one of the major causes of such losses.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most powerful form of communication used by human beings to communicate their thoughts, feelings and emotions. It helps them to think and build relationship with others as well. Moreover, it also assists people to understand their culture, religion, values and morals of a society. In short, language is a tool of communication which shapes our thoughts and helps us to express ourselves. According to Fromkin (1999), language is the source of human life and its power lies in its meanings and its functions enabling people to communicate and each language is unique due to its vocabulary, structure and grammar. These differences among languages can create problems of communication between speakers of various societies. Therefore, translation can serve as a bridge to reduce communication gap between speakers of different languages.

Catford (1965) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language by an equivalent textual material in another language" (p. 20). In this respect, Catford (1965) is more concerned with formal language rules and grammar, rather than the context or the pragmatics involved in the text. However, he stressed that "since every language is formally sui-generis, and formal correspondence is, at best, a rough approximation it is clear that the formal meaning of source language items can rarely be the same" (p. 36). Nida & Taber (1969) claimed that "translation is a process of transferring message from the source language into the target language" (p. 15). To sum up translation transfers the meaning through written or spoken language so that the message conveyed in the source language can be understood by a large number of people speaking other languages.

Hornby (1988) defines translation as "a complex act of communication in which the Source Language–

author, the reader as translator and translator as Target Language–author and the Target Language–reader interact” (p. 81). Thus, translation is an intricate process in which the author, the translator, and the reader interact with each other. According to Martono (1995) “translation is possible by an equivalent of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions. The thought or content of the two verbal expressions must be equivalent to the thought expressed in the source language” (p. 72). Therefore, the task of the translator is to transfer faithfully both the meaning and the message of the source language into the target language. Every language possesses linguistic, social, cultural and psychological features and the absence of these features in one language creates a lot of difficulty for a translator as he has to transfer the intended meaning of the source text into the target text. Consequently, some unavoidable losses can occur during the process of translation.

According to Baker (1992) these losses are of two types: Inevitable loss and Avertable loss. Inevitable loss occurs because of linguistic differences between two languages, i.e., the source language and the target language. Subsequently, English and Arabic belong to two different language families, so the difference between the two languages can be investigated. English belongs to Germanic Indo-European language family and Arabic belongs to Semitic language family. Avertable loss occurs when a translator fails to find the equivalent or suitable translation in the target text. Furthermore, numerous problems and differences exist at linguistic, social and cultural level between two languages for example the Arabic language and English language. All these elements have an impact on the translation of different genres, such as prose, novel, drama, poetry and the sacred text like the Holy Qur’an. Among all these genres, translation of the Holy Qur’an is a challenging task for a translator, because it carries the word of Allah. In translation studies, Baker (1992) presented the idea of meaning and message by adopting a bottom up approach (moving from simple to complex). She highlighted the importance of a single word in the process of translation because the translator looks initially at a phoneme, i.e., a single word as a unit, in order to find out their equivalence in the target language. According to Baker (1992) “a single word can sometimes be assigned different

meanings in different languages. Consequently, when translating word parameters such as number, gender, and tense should be taken into consideration” (p. 12). Thus a translator aims to transfer ideas of the original text in the target text. Hence, Baker’s (1992) typology was adopted as the theoretical framework for the present study to analyze the two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin (The Heart of Holy Qur’an). Khamami (2005) argues that this Surah was revealed because non-believers raised a question about the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ. Surah Ya-Sin was referred to as “the heart of Holy Qur’an” by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as it contains all the five pillars of Islam.

The aim of this research is to compare the two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin from al-Qur’an, translated by two translators, i.e., Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry. The first translator Abdullah Yusuf Ali is an Indian Muslim scholar who interpreted the Holy Qur’an in English language in 1938. The text for the present study was selected from his work “The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translation and Commentary” (1968). The second translation is selected from Arthur John Arberry’s work “The Koran Interpreted” (1996). He is a British Orientalist and a scholar of Arabic, Persian and Islamic studies. The purpose of the present study was to find Semantic loss and its causes in the English translations of Surah Ya-Sin rendered by these two translators. Moreover, the objective of the study is to investigate to what extent the linguistic and cultural essence of the source text has been maintained by the two translators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores the concept of translation, types of translation, its methods and procedures. Moreover, it focuses on the role of the translator and translation strategies used during the process of translation. It also investigates challenges encountered by the translator and examines the concept of equivalence and semantic loss.

2.1 The Concept of Translation

The English term translation comes from Latin “translatio” which means “transporting”. According to Munday (2012) “the process of translation between

two different languages includes the changes of an original written text (the source text) in the original verbal language (the source language) into a written text (the target text) in a different verbal language (the target language)” (p. 8). Hatim & Munday (2004) defined translation from two different viewpoints: firstly as a process and secondly as a product. As a process, translation is an act of taking a text from one language and changing it into another and as a product; it focuses on the results attained by the translator, the concrete product of translation.

Catford (1965) states that “translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language)” (p. 20). Newark (1988) describes translation as “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text” (p. 5). According to Nida & Taber (2003) “translation is “the reproduction in the receptor language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, and second in terms of style” (p. 12). Shiyab (2006) describes translation as the transmission of a message transferred from one text into a message communicated in another, with a high degree of attaining equivalence of context of the message, components of the original text, and the semiotic elements of the text. To sum up, translation can be defined as transferring the form and meaning of the source text into the target text.

2.2 Brief History of Translation

Translation as an active human movement appeared with the social progress as it was means of communication between people. The very first form of translation was the oral one due to the simple language system and non-existence of written language. A brief history of translation in the Western and the Arab world is presented in the following paragraph.

2.2.1 In the Western world

A lot of western translators appeared in prehistoric and modern times. Cicero and Horace (first century BC) were the old schools of translation. They differentiated between word for word translation and sense for sense translation. St Jerome (fourth century

CE), renowned for his translation of the Greek King James Bible into Latin, was the first one to differentiate between translation of religious texts from other texts. According to him, the correct translation is based on translator’s understanding of the original text and the degree of understanding the target language. For many centuries, mainly religious texts were translated and it was only from sixteenth century onwards that translation appeared in other domains and fields of study such as politics, war and literature.

The invention of printing system in the fifteenth century paved the way for the development and improvement of translation. Moreover, renowned theorists like John Dryden (1631-1700), Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) and Etienne Dolet (1915-1946) made significant contributions in the field of translation. In the twentieth century, translation developed as a science called translation studies due to contributions by many scholars such as Jean-Paul Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) in stylistic, J.C.Catford with his book “*linguistic theory of translation*” (1965), Eugene Nida’s *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) and Peter Newmark’s *Approaches to Translation* (1988).

2.2.2 In the Arab World

Arabs established relationships with the Romans and the Persians which consequently helped to promote the language and culture of the nations. Arabic terminology and numerology were introduced in Persian and Roman languages with the help of translation. Zainurrahman (2009) is of the view that “with the spread of Islam and non-Arabic speaking communities, communication with Jews, Romans and others emphasized the findings of translators to translate and encouraging foreign language learning” (p. 5). Translation increased during the time of caliphate due to the need to maintain contacts with non-Arabic speaking communities and to promote culture, science and literature.

Arabic interest in translation reached its climax during the time of Khalifa Haroun-ul-Rashid who praised famous translators for example Yohana Ibn Al- Batriq, Ibn Naima Al-Himsi, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq AlJawahiri, and Al-Jahid for their works and their

knowledge of target language and rewarded them generously. "In addition to his insistence on the language structure and the culture of his people, the Almighty spoke much about the importance of modifying translation. In short, the Al-Jahiz had two books Al-Hayawan and Al-Bayan Wa Altabayin" (ibid) which provided extensive ideas.

2.3 Types of Translation

Roman Jakobson (1959) presents three types of translation: intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic. Intralingual translation involves interpreting of verbal signs in the same language whereas interlingual translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other languages. Intersemiotic translation refers to transmutation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal signs system. Moreover, Catford (1965) defines full versus partial translation in his prominent book "*A Linguistic Theory of Translation*". He further elaborates that in full translation "the entire text is submitted to the translation process: that is, every part of the source language text is replaced by the target language text material" (p. 21). In this type, every single detail of the source language text is rendered; every single feature is transported into the target language. On the contrary, in partial translation "some part or parts of the source language text are left untranslated" (ibid). Translation can either be "Literal" or "Free". Literalists tend to make form inseparable from content, while partisans of free translation tend to believe the same message can be conveyed in what is perhaps a radically different form" (Rose, 1981, p. 31).

2.4 The Role of the Translator

Nida & Waard (1986) states that "the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message" (p. 21). Bassnett (1991) stresses that "the translator has to take the question of interpretation into account" (p. 22). She adds that the interpreter needs to reflect carefully the ideological implications of the translation. Thus, the translator plays a vital role because "a successful translation relies, in the first instance, on the translator" (Katan, 1999, p. 10). He

affirms that the translator needs to be well experienced in the customs, traditions and behaviors of the two cultures. Moreover, the translator needs solid background information about the cultures he is working with, particularly the topography and modern social and political history. Nida (2001) considers that "the translator's lack of awareness of the cultures of the Source language and the Target Language breaks three key principles of translation" (p. 1). These principles are: faithfulness (faithful equivalence in meaning), expressiveness (expressive clarity of form) and elegance (attractive elegance that makes a text a pleasure to read). To sum up, the role of the translator has been shifted from that of transferors of words and sentences between two languages to mediators of culture and cross-cultural communicative functions.

2.5 The Challenges of translation

Translation is a complex task and the translator may encounter challenges at structural, semantic and cultural level while translating from a source text into a target text. Consequently, semantic loss may occur when source text meaning is not transferred in the target text.

2.6 Semantic Loss

Nida (1994) argues that "the relationship between words in two different languages does not correspond to one-to-one sets or even one-to-many sets; in addition, there are a lot of fuzziness, obscurity, and ambiguity in the boundaries between any two languages" (p. 10). Because of these complicated structures of words within the languages, translators face many problems related to loss of meaning of the source language text in the target language text. The target language's linguistic system may not represent a lot of meanings of the source language. For example, sometimes English grammar lacks plural forms but plurality makes a big difference in meaning (Abdul-Raof, 2004). Semantic loss can occur because of difference of vocabularies in different languages in the process of translation. Ameel et al., (2009) state that "languages map words in different ways; a concept that can be expressed by just one word in English may be expressed by many words in another language" (p. 45). For example, the English word "cup" can be rendered in Arabic and the Qur'anic

language into different lexemes as كاس, كوب and ابيريق. Such a gap of vocabularies may cause difficulty in translation and henceforth, losses could occur.

Al-Masri (2009) is of the view that “Semantic losses, cultural losses or in equivalences, can result from overlooking the literariness or figurativeness of the source text” (p. 8). At times translators do not notice figures of speech or rhetorical devices in the source language. Therefore, a loss in literary translation takes place when translators have difficulties in understanding the symbolic meaning. This can also be applicable to the Holy Qur’an as its language is more cultured than literary texts. Semantic loss can be categorized into two groups: linguistic (semantic and syntactic) and cultural. These semantic problems can include lexical and morphological problems. Whereas, cultural problems include the cultural specific and cultural bound terms while translating any text. Baker (1992) categorized cultural problems as cultural bound and cultural specific terms and they can cause loss in translations of literary texts.

The present research aims to investigate semantic loss in two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin by two translators: Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry. The Holy Quran is the sacred book of Muslims and thus is a challenging task for the translators to render its complete meaning due to lack of equivalence in the target language.

2.7 Problems and Inadequacies in Translating the Holy Qur’an

As Arberry (1973) says “the Qur’an is neither prose nor poetry, but a unique fusion of both. So it is clear that a translator cannot imitate its form as it is a Quran-specific form having both the features of prose and poetry and utilizing beautifully the peculiar properties of the original language” (p. 10). Similarly, it is so carefully bonded with its content that neither form-focused nor content-focused translation can replace an equivalent translation in terms of either form or content.

Usually, the idea of equivalence at different levels is always the central notion in translation studies and Qur’anic translations in particular. Abdul Raof

(2001) states that “one cannot deny the centrality of equivalence in translation theory and it will continue to dominate translation training programs and translation in general. He accepts it as true that whether at a micro-level or at a macro-level, one cannot accomplish absolute symmetrical equivalence for languages as their various layers of meaning and their cultures in which they display, are considerably different” (p. 7). Therefore, every translator puts emphasis on equivalence, for example, denotative, aesthetic and translate accordingly ending up with a different translation. According to Baker (1992), “Problems and difficulties due to lack of equivalence appear at all language levels starting from the word level to the textual level. Non-equivalence at word level indicates the lack of a direct target language equivalent item for a source language item. The type and level of difficulty posed may vary to a large extent depending on the nature of non-equivalence. Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies, some very straightforward, others more involved and difficult to handle” (Baker, 1992; 20).

2.8 Semantics and Translation

2.8.1 Lexical Meaning

Lyon (1981) says that “Semantics is the study of linguistics meaning or morphemes, words, phrase and sentence. It deals with the description of word and sentence meaning. There are certain kinds of meaning and certain aspects of meaning in linguistics” (p. 35). The word “lexical” is defined as the lexemic meaning which depends on the particular context in which it is used. It is not easy to categorize the lexical meaning because it not only deals with literal meaning but also with denotation and connotation, synonymy, hyponymy, polysemy and homonymy. For the present study, Baker’s typology (1992) was applied in order to identify the following lexical and morphological problems: synonymy, polysemy, homonymy and hyponymy.

2.8.1.1 Synonymy

Synonymy “is a lexical relationship used to refer to the sameness of meaning” (Palmer 1981, p. 2). According to Shunnaq (1992) “translating synonyms is confusing because of the slight differences between

the synonyms” (p. 40). As a consequence, a native speaker can judge these variations more faithfully as compared to a non-native speaker. Shehab (2009) discusses the example of two Arabic words “yaghbit” and “yashud” as they cannot be understood without the information of the differences among these synonyms. Hence, translators can use the word “envy” for both, but it does not transfer the original meaning because the word “yaghbit” has a positive connotation whereas “yashud” has a negative connotation.

According Murphy (2003) “synonyms can be grouped into different types and commonly be recognized as lexical relations. Synonyms are interpretable on the basis of theories, knowledge, traditions and everyday convention” (p. 43). To sum up, a synonym refers to words which are considered to be similar in meaning.

2.8.1.2 Homonymy

According to Simpson (1981) “There are two views regarding lexical ambiguity: that words have their lexical ambiguity prior to their semantic occurrence inside a text or that lexical ambiguity is context dependent, and this means it occurs due to the effect of text” (p. 45). The key explanations of lexical ambiguity are homonymy and polysemy. According to Crystal (1991) homonymy “refers to the relationship when two words have the same spelling but different meanings” (p. 54). The best example of the homonym is the word “bank”. According to Collins Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2006), “it is an institution where people and business keep their money” (p. 97) or it can be defined as bank of the river, which is defined as, “the raised areas of ground along its river edge” (p. 98).

Homonymy “is a term used in semantic analysis to refer to lexical items which have the same form but differ in meaning” (Crystal 2008; p. 231). It is also defined as “a word with the same pronunciation as another but with a different meaning, origin, and, usually spelling” (Webster’s New world College Dictionary 1985). To conclude, Homonymy involves layers of meaning according to the context in which it is used.

2.8.1.3 Polysemy

Polysemy according to Geeraerts (2010) “refers to the multiplicity of meaning as when a word is used in different fields with different meanings” (p. 12). For example, the word عين has different meanings in Arabic such as عين الصواب and عين الحقيقة both mean “completely right” while on the other hand عين الإبرة means “the needle’s eye”. Depending on the context, it can also mean a spy. As a result, “they are polysemous because they have the same etymological root and this kind of polysemy might create ambiguity for a translator” (Sadiq 2008, p. 38). So, a polysemy has a number of apparently related meanings.

2.8.1.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy is a phenomenon that shows the lexical relationship between more general terms and the more specific instances of it. For example, the lexical relationship of yellow, black, white is color. So, red can be called as hyponym of color. A hyponymy includes the meaning of a more general word. For example, the words “fig and olive” have a hyponym relation in Surah 95 “By the fig and the olive”. Fig is a tree with a soft sweet fruit of small seeds. Olive is a tree found in southern Europe with a small fruit, eaten raw used for making cooking oil. Both of them (fig and olive) are kinds of fruit so, fig and olive are hyponyms of the hypernym, fruit.

METHODOLOGY

Research is a “systematic process of formulating question, collecting relevant data relating to questions, analyzing, interpreting the data and making the results publicly accessible” (Nunan, 2000, p. 23). Thus, research methodology aims to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter that is also referred to as a research problem. The research methodology describes different standards used by the researcher to probe and solve the given research problem. Moreover, it clarifies why the researcher is using a particular method to enable the research results to be evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others (Kothari, 1990).

Therefore, this section focuses on the research methods used by the researcher to collect data in order to answer the research questions. It also justifies the reason for selecting the particular research method, determines the sample selected for the study and how the research was carried out.

3.1 Nature of Study

This research was qualitative in nature. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define qualitative research as “the one that refers to any kind of research that produces findings that are not attained by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification, and instead, the kind of research that produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the interest area is pronounced naturally” (p. 45). Sandelowsk (2000) is of the opinion that data collection in a qualitative research “may include observations of targeted events, focus group interviews and the examination of documents and artefacts” (p. 58). Therefore, the researcher chose qualitative method research for the present study and collected data from two English translations of Al Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and by Arthur John Arberry. English translations of Surah Yasin by these two translators were selected to examine semantic loss as qualitative inquiry focuses in depth on small purposeful samples (Patton, 1990).

3.2 Sources of the Research

The data of the present study were two English translated texts of “Surah Ya-Sin” and were taken from the works of Abdullah Yusuf Ali “The Holy Qur’an: Text and Translation” (1938/1968) and Arthur John Arberry’s “The Koran Interpreted” (1996). Tafsir Ibn Khathir (2000) was used as the reference book to examine the interpretation of the Arabic verses of Surah Ya-Sin. Dictionaries such as Collins Co-Build Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (2000) and Cambridge Advanced Dictionary (2006) were used to check the meanings of lexicons used in the two translations. Moreover, two Arabic language experts who are also proficient in English were consulted to verify the selected data.

3.3 Purpose and Procedures of Data Collection

Purpose of data collection was to find out the answers of following research questions: 1) how linguistic deviations of the source text are dealt by both the translators? 2) What are the similarities and differences between the two translations? 3) What are the types and causes of semantic losses in the two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin? The data collection procedure involved three phases:

1. In the first phase, Surah Ya-Sin and its interpretation (Tafsir) in the reference book: Ibn Kathir (2000) was selected and followed by selection of translations of Surah Ya-Sin by Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his seminal work “The Holy Qur’an: Translation and Commentary” (1938/1968) and by Arthur John Arberry in his work “The Koran Interpreted” (1973).
2. In the second phase, the two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin were studied to understand the lexical meanings of the verses.
3. Finally, a comparison of lexical meanings in the two English translations was carried out with the help of authentic meanings in the reference book

3.4 Translation Tools

As Baker (1992) states “in order to meet the structural, stylistic and grammatical demands of the target language translation process requires certain strategies” (p. 11). The present study examines the following translation tools defined by Baker (1992):

- “Borrowing is one of the translation strategies that bring source language to the target language. Borrowing is a strategy or procedure to adopt source language when target language has no equivalent for the source language. For example, the Arabic word “aydyulujia” is adopted from English language, “ideology” (ibid., 315)
- Addition is a strategy used to help translators to add cultural information while keeping an eye on the differences between the source language and the target language.
- Omission or deletion means there is no translation of source language in the target language.

- Modulation involves a change in lexical elements, a shift in point of view. Modulation is a key procedure in translation. It may take place at the same time.

- Transliteration is the process of rendering the letters of one alphabet into the letters of another with the different alphabetical system” (ibid).

3.5 Selected Translations and Their translators

During the twentieth century, both Muslims and non-Muslims translated the meaning of the Qur'an. The number of translations is thought to be more than fifty. Fourteen of these are popular nowadays (Mohammed, 2005). Due to the large number of translated versions and the impossibility of studying them all, only two translations were selected for the present research. The first translation is by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, a Muslim translator and the second translation is by Arthur John Arberry, a non-Muslim translator whose translation is considered as the main source of reference on Islam by Western academics (Khaleel, M. 2006, Al-Sahli 1996). The aim of selecting these translators from two different religious backgrounds is to examine the similarities and differences in their English translations of Surah Ya-Sin.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, born in 1872 to a religious family in Bombay, India, memorized the Holy Qur'an and received Arabic and Islamic education at a very young age. He obtained an Indian Civil Service award to study English literature at Cambridge University in which he excelled. He resided in London for a considerable period of time and developed an interest to translate the Qur'an into

European languages. After his return to Lahore, he became Dean of Islamic College, where he began his translation and commentary on the Qur'an (Ali 1989).

Arthur Arberry, a Cambridge University graduate, was born in 1905. He spent several years in the Middle East perfecting his Arabic and Persian language skills (Lyons, 2004). For a short while, he served as Professor of Classics at Cairo University; in 1946, he became Professor of Persian at the University of London, and the following year was transferred to Cambridge to become Professor of Arabic. Arberry served there until his death in 1969.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data revealed that the extent of semantic losses in the English translation of Surah Ya-Sin can be either complete or partial. These losses occur due to the usage words that are not proper in their respective semantic fields (shift in meaning). More details about these losses are discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Partial or Complete Loss

Complete losses are the losses that change the meaning or give an opposite one. However, partial losses are those losses in which the message of the source text (ST) is partially conveyed. Examining the verses under study carefully, it can be seen that the verses sometimes show partial loss of meaning; while, sometimes, they show complete loss of meaning. Mostly, the over dominant type of loss is the partial one as shown in the table below.

Table 4.1 Partial loss in two English Translations

The Original Verse in Arabic	Abdullah Yusuf Ali's Translation	Arthur John Arberry's Translation
وَالْقُرْآنُ الْحَكِيمُ ٢	2. By the Qur'an, Full of Wisdom,-	2.By the <u>Wise</u> Koran,
Abdullah Yusuf Ali translated the Arabic word “الْحَكِيمُ” in 2 nd verse as “Full of wisdom” by using a noun. He neither added nor deleted any information while translating this word. Arthur John Arberry translated the Arabic word “الْحَكِيمُ” as “wise” by using an adjective. The shift in the grammatical		category from noun “Wisdom” to adjective “Wise” resulted in shift in the meaning. This shows that
		Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation is close to the original meaning of the source text as he explained and clarified the concept by adding the adverb “full”

and wrote “F” in capital letter. The meaning of the source text was rendered clearly in the target text by Abdullah Yusuf Ali as he used addition and capitalization as translation strategies. On the contrary, partial loss occurred in Arthur John

Arberry’s translation as the complete meaning of the source text was not transferred in the target text.

Example of complete loss is as under:

Table 4.2 Complete loss in the two English Translations

The Original Verse in Arabic	Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s Translation	Arthur John Arberry’s Translation
إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فُكُوهٌ ۝ ٥٥	55. Verily the Companions Of the Garden shall That Day have joy In all that they do;	55. See, the inhabitants of <u>Paradise</u> today are busy in their rejoicing,
هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلٍّ عَلَى الْأَرْنَابِ مُتَّكِنُونَ ۝ ٥٦	56. They and their associates Will be in groves Of (cool) shade, <u>reclining</u> On Thrones (of dignity);	56. They and their spouses, reclining upon couches in the shade;
لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَدْعُونَ ۝ ٥٧	57. (Every) fruit (enjoyment) Will be there for them; They shall have whatever They call for;	57. Therein they have fruits, and they have all that they call for.

In verse 55, the Arabic word “الْجَنَّةُ” means “a pleasant place promised by Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى) to pious persons or to those who fear Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى) (Ibn e Khatir, 2000). Abdullah Yusuf Ali translated “الْجَنَّةُ” as “the Garden” which means “a piece of land next to or around your house where you can grow your flowers, fruits, vegetables, etc, usually with an area and grass” (Oxford Dictionary, 2000). Thus, complete loss at semantic level occurred in Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s translation as the meaning of the source text message was not conveyed at all in the target text. In contrast, Arthur John Arberry used the word “Paradise” for the Arabic word “الْجَنَّةُ” which according to Oxford dictionary (2000) means “(in some religions) a perfect place where people go when

they die, extremely beautiful and that seems perfect, and particular activities did by persons” (p. 96). Hence, Arthur John Arberry rendered the meaning of the source text in the target text in order to make it understandable for the target Western readers.

4.2 Research Findings and Assessment of two translations

The present study finds semantic loss and its causes according to hypothesis made:

1. Examining the linguistic deviations of the source text into the target texts.
2. Exploring the similarities and differences between the two translations.
3. Identifying the types and causes of semantic loss in two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin.

4.2.1. Linguistic deviations

Leech (1969) deals with eight different types of linguistic deviation, distinguishing the three main language levels: Realization, Form and Semantics. Realization is realized by Phonology and Graphology, Form comprises Grammar and Lexicon, and Semantics is (Denotative or Cognitive) Meaning. To limit the analysis, only form and semantics will be taken into consideration because it is related to the present study and Baker’s (1992) theoretical framework will be used. According to Baker (1992), form is comprised of grammar and lexical items. The grammar of Arabic language is different from English language as shown in the table:

Table 4.2.1 Selected verses from the text of Surah Ya-Sin and two English Translations

The Original Verse in Arabic	Abdullah Yusuf Ali's Translation	Arthur John Arberry's Translation
إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَ آثَارَهُمْ ۚ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ١٢	12. Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before and that which They leave behind, and of all things have We taken account In a clear Book (Of evidence).	12. Surely it is <u>We</u> who bring the dead to life and write down what they have forwarded and what they have left behind; everything We have numbered in a clear register
إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اتْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُونَ ١٤	14. When We (first) sent To them two apostles, They rejected them: But we strengthened them With a third: They said, "Truly, we have been sent On a mission to you."	14. When <u>We sent</u> unto them two men, but they cried them lies, so We sent a third as reinforcement. They said, 'We are assuredly Envoys unto you'.
قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ ١٦	16. They said: "Our Lord doth Know that <u>we</u> have been sent On a mission to you:	16. They said, 'Our Lord knows <u>we</u> are Envoys unto you; And it is only for us to deliver the Manifest Message.'
قَالُوا إِنَّا نَطِيرُكُمْ بِكُمْ ۚ لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَ لَنَمَسَّنَّكُمْ مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ١٨	18. The (people) said: "For us, <u>We</u> augur an evil omen From you: if ye desist not, We will certainly stone you. And a grievous punishment Indeed will be inflicted On you by us."	18. They said, ' <u>We</u> augur ill of you. If you give not over, <u>we</u> will stone you and there shall visit you from us a painful chastisement.'

In the above examples, the pronoun “I” has homonymic relationship between verses 12, 14, 16 and 18. The same phonological word has different connotations when used in the text. In verse 12, in the Arabic word “إِنَّا”, “إِنَّا” means “we” and is used as a pronoun in the above verses but the position of pronoun changes the meaning of the verse. These verses are about the homonym relation: the pronoun “we” certainly refers to different subject. The pronoun “we” in verses 12 and 14 refer to the supremacy of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى). In verse 14, in the last sentence the pronoun “إِنَّا” refers to “the messengers” and in verse 18 “إِنَّا” refers to the people of Antaqiyah.

In verse 18, Arthur John Arberry translated the pronoun “إِنَّا” as “we”. Whereas, “we” refers to the power of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى) that He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى) has power to do anything.

Other than grammatical errors, linguistics deviations include the problem of lexical items: synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy and polysemy as discussed by Baker (1992). Analysis of lexical relations results that Surah Ya-Sin is largely consists of synonymy relationship. Synonymy is the dominant relationship found in Surah Ya-Sin. No hyponymy relation is found, as hyponymy refers to the use of more general term. Translators instead of using more general

terms, they have focused on similar word in order to understandable by the common reader.

According to Simpson (1981) “There are two views regarding lexical ambiguity: that words have their lexical ambiguity prior to their semantic occurrence inside a text or that lexical ambiguity is context dependent, and this means it occurs due to the effect of text” (p. 75). The major causes of lexical ambiguity are Homonymy and Polysemy. According to Crystal (1991) Homonymy “refers to the relationship when two words have the same spelling but different meanings” (p. 54). Whereas, polysemy according to Geeraerts (2010), “refers to the multiplicity of meaning as when a word is used in

different fields with different meanings”. For example, the word (عينaAAin) has different meanings in Arabic such as (عين الصوادaAAinu alssawab) and (عين الحقيقهaAAinu alhaqqeqah) both mean completely right while on the other hand (عينaAAinu alibrah) means the needle’s eye. Depending on the context, it can also mean a spy. As a result, “they are polysymes because they have the same etymological root. Such a kind of polysemy might create ambiguity for a translator” (Sadiq 2008, p.38).

The example of homonymy relationship lies in verse 10 and 66

Table 4.2.2 Selected verses from the text of Surah Ya-Sin and two English Translations

The Original Verse in Arabic	Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s Translation	Arthur John Arberry’s Translation
وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ١٠	10. The same is it to them Whether thou admonish them Or thou do not admonish Them: They will not believe.	10. Alike it is to them whether thou hast warned them or thou hast not warned them, they <u>do not believe</u> .
وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّى يُبْصِرُونَ ٦٦	66. If it had been <u>our Will</u> , We could surely have Blotted out their eyes; Then should they have Run about groping for the Path, But how could they have seen?	66. Did <u>We will</u> , We would have obliterated their eyes, then they would race to the path, but how would they see?

The above table shows the use of homonym “will” by the two translators. The word “will” which is phonetically similar, but convey different meanings according to the words used in the above verses. In verse 10, “لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ” has two syllables: “يُؤْم” and “نُونَ”. “يُؤْم” is 3rd person masculine plural (form IV) imperfect verb and “نُونَ” is subject pronoun which means “they will believe” but “لَا” means “not”. Therefore, “لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ” means “they will not believe”. Abdullah Yusuf Ali used “will” as a verb in future tense and used “will” as a noun in verse 66 to indicate God’s will. But in the source text, it is used as a plural verb “نَشَاءُ” (1st first person plural imperfect verb) which means “we willed”. Therefore, both the verses show the homonymy relation among

them as they have same pronunciation but different meanings in both the verses.

In verse 10, Arberry used “do not” instead of “will”. Here, the grammatical category changes as the word “will” is an appropriate word used in Ali’s translation as Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has warned people that Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) will punish those who do not believe in Oneness of God and Prophethood. Consequently, Arabic text is rich in vocabulary as a single word has many meanings according to the context in which that particular word is used.

Therefore, linguistic and lexical analysis shows that the dominant cases that occurred of lexical found in

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation. The most dominant is synonym, and homonym is the lower case.

4.2.2 Similarities and differences between the two translations of Surah Ya-Sin

The similarities and differences have been shown in the table a to table m. Table a:

4.2.2.1 Similarities:

The words *indeed, verily and truly* (in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation) have the synonym relationship as those words have the same sense about the expression of really. From dictionary "Indeed" expression is used to emphasize a statement. It is used to show that you are surprised or that you find ridiculous. The word "Truly" is sincerely feeling grateful, really, brave action. (Oxford Dictionary, 2000).

In other words, the words like really, truly will do something or assert something to other people. The use of "indeed" in the verse 3 serves to assert that Allah has sent one of the messengers. In the verse 18 it also shows the assertion from the people who claim they will inflict punishment on the messengers, then the verse 12 is that "We truly give life to the dead", the last is verse 14 which also explain that the messenger is really sent for the people (Yusuf Ali, 165).

4.2.2.2 Differences:

In comparison, Arberry has translated the words *indeed, verily and truly* as *truly, surely and assuredly*. One of the problems that translators of sacred texts like "Qur'an" may face and fail to overcome is semantic void which is caused by the inability to differentiate in meaning between synonyms. A semantic void is where there aren't the words to express a concept or idea, so something that is impossible to translate would be a semantic void. In verse 3, Arberry has translated the word "indeed" as "truly", which is not conveying the exact meaning. Other than the words, "truly, surely and verily", Arberry has translated the Holy Qur'an as "clear register" in verse 12 that contains different meaning as far as the context is concerned. Whereas, Yusuf Ali has somehow maintained the context and translated it as "Clear Book (of evidence)". This shows the authenticity of the Book, i.e., the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, there is lot of similarities and differences between the two translations discussed in the analysis part. On the basis of these similarities and differences, the researcher came to know that among both the translations, Abdullah Yusuf Ali has somehow maintained the essence of original text. He also provided footnotes and additional information in parenthesis in order to clarify the meanings. Whereas, Arthur John Arberry translated Surah Ya-Sin as translation by paraphrase and sometimes literal meanings. The Holy Qur'an is the word of Allah Almighty; it cannot be translated by literal meanings. He has used the words which cannot convey the complete meaning. For the translation of the Holy Qur'an knowledge of Arabic language and its rich culture is required.

4.3 Semantic Losses (Shift in Meaning)

The shift in meaning that results from using a word that is not proper in a semantic field is one of the common types of losses in Ali's translation of the Surah. A semantic field denotes a segment of reality symbolized by a set of related words. These words in a semantic field share a common semantic property (Brinton, 2000). Hence, many words can share shades of meaning, but they do have differences in their denotations as well as their connotations. As a result, translators sometimes choose one word, while the other one is the more precise option. The data in appendix shows examples of such a kind of losses in the Surah. From Appendix C, it can be seen that the translator tends to use vocabularies that do not convey the intended meaning. One of the main features of Qur'an translation is that there is no one and only accurate rendering of certain Qur'anic expressions. The proper choice between equivalents is a problem that often presents itself to the translator of the Qur'an. For example, the 2nd Ayah consists of two words, i.e. (wal-quranil- hakim). The syntactic pattern of the first word is "wal-qur'ani", 'wa' means oath and it is a prefix which is used with a proper noun, i.e., Qur'an. This shows that Allah Almighty is taking oath from the messenger. Both the translators used the strategy, i.e., 'Translation by Paraphrase' because translators could not find the word that describes the letter 'wa' meaning oath. As for the 2nd word, al-hakimi is used as an adjective. Translators have translated the word al-hakimi as, wisdom and

wise. Abdullah Yusuf Ali has translated it as a noun and Arthur John Arberry has translated it as an adjective. Whereas, in the original Arabic text, it is used as a genitive masculine singular adjective *صفة مجرورة* that Allah Almighty is taking oath of a wise Qur'an, the Qur'an which is full of wisdom and knowledge. The strategy, 'Translation by the more general term' is used because the letter (wa) is the cultural specific term and there is no equivalent term to render the exact meaning of the oath, so the translators have translated ayah by using the more general term i.e., 'By the Qur'an'.

In this context of translation, the expressive meaning is lost, as well. It reflects an over translation. The translation of such verse conveys a complete loss of meaning, as it is not imagined that a non-native speaker of Arabic perceives the meaning of the source text (ST) out of the translation. In addition, the expressive and connotative meanings are lost in the translation. In the second example (table 2), both Arberry and Ali translate the word (Mustaqim) as (Straight path), however the term (Straight path) is a part of (Mustaqim) because this word refers to the path of those people on which Allah Almighty has showered His blessings. Therefore, the translation does not convey the full semantic and liturgical scope of the Qura'nic terms. This loss of meaning in translating the verse is partial because the general meaning is partially conveyed.

The third example (table 14) shows a semantic loss in the translation where literal interpretation into English, may not only cause unintelligibility but also a semantic ambiguity. Semantic ambiguity occurs when a single word may have multiple meanings. The words like "orchid" and "gardens" have been translated by both the translators. In Arabic, *khusi* is called as "orchid" and "garden" is called as "hadeeqa" in Arabic. Therefore, there are different meanings for the single word. Arberry has skipped dates while describing the fruits of "Jannah". Here, the translator does not have translated the fruits of "paradise". Instead of using the word "orchids" and "gardens", the appropriate translation for this word is "paradise" which is related to "Jannah" or translator can also borrow the same word while translating in order to maintain the original essence. The translation of the verse resulted in complete loss of meaning, as

the denotative and connotative meanings of the verse are not conveyed in the translation. Similarly, in the fourth example (Verse 35), the translation of the mentioned verse contains an avertable loss which is very common and often inevitable in translation as it occurs as a result of the lack of equivalence in English and Arabic, especially in the domain of culture-specific terms. Many religious and cultural words have no equivalents in the two languages such as the term (faj-jarna) the plural form. This Ayah speaks of the Jews and Christians, who think they alone, will enter Paradise but false desires or no more than wishful thinking. By reference to Al-Zamakhchari interpretation, Ali has succeeded in his translation by rendering the intended Qura'nic meaning, which is "springs", however, Arberry is far from the intended meaning and he has mistranslated this lexical term, so loss occurred.

Therefore, The Qur'anic text is accurate, complex, and pregnant with meanings, so translators should be attentive and sensitive to the language options in the target language (TL).

4.5 Types of semantic losses

Martono (1995) states that there are two types of losses, i.e., complete loss and partial loss. When the source text (ST) cannot be replaced by target text (TT), then it is called as complete loss. Whereas, in Partial loss, some parts of the source texts are left untranslated.

4.5.1 Partial loss and Complete Loss

Complete losses are the losses that change the meaning or give an opposite one. However, partial losses are those losses in which the message of the source text (ST) is partially conveyed. Examining the verses under study carefully, it can be seen that the verses sometimes show partial loss of meaning; while, sometimes, they show complete loss of meaning. Mostly, the over dominant type of loss is the partial one. For example, in the ninth verse (see Table 1.6, verse 9), there is a complete loss because the Arabic word "ja-alna" has been translated as "have put" which cannot convey the complete meaning as that of the original word which means "have made". And a single word "ja-alna" has been translated as a phrase in English language. The meaning of the source text (ST) word is very effective and has a strong effect on the ears of native

speakers of Arabic. An example of partial loss is Verse 3 and 4 (table 1.5) as the meaning has been conveyed, but not accurately.

Other types of losses are: Avertable loss and Inevitable loss described by Baker (1992): Inevitable loss occurs because of different language systems between two languages, i.e., the source language and the target language. Subsequently, English and Arabic belong to two different language families, so the difference between the two languages can be investigated. English belongs to Germanic Indo-European language family and Arabic belongs to Semitic language family. Avertable loss occurs when a translator fails to find the equivalence or suitable translation in the target text. Moreover, many difficulties and differentiations exist at linguistic, social and cultural level between the two languages, i.e., the Arabic language and English language.

4.6 Causes of Semantic Loss

Following Baker's (1992) typology of equivalence at five levels:

1. Equivalence at word level deals with the meaning of each single word or expression.
2. Equivalence above the word level explores arrangements of the words and phrases.
3. Grammatical Equivalence deals with the grammatical categories.
4. Textual Equivalence discusses the text level (word order, cohesion etc.).
5. Pragmatic Equivalence shows that how texts are used in communicative context that involve variables such as writers, readers, and cultural settings.

The following causes of losses have been identified.

4.6.1 Culturally bound terms

Culturally bound terms are some of the prominent problems of equivalence in the process of translation. Culture is the umbrella that most of the other semantic problems fall under. In the Verse 35 (table 5), for instance, the translation failed to find an equivalence to the word "jannatin" because it is one of the culturally bound concepts that do not have equivalents in English; they are purely Islamic religion terms. Likewise, in the Verse 63 (table 1.11), the translation failed to convey the complete meaning

of "Gehenna" because it is a cultural concept that can only be found in the Holy Qur'an.

4.6.2 Lack of lexicalization

Another cause of semantic loss, as stated by Baker (1992), is the case when the Arabic terms are not lexicalized in the English language. An example of lack of lexicalization in the target language (TL) is the Verse 9 (table 1.10), in which the translator attempted to convey the meaning by using paraphrase as a strategy.

4.6.3 Semantically complex words.

Furthermore, Baker (1992) mentions another cause of problems of equivalence in translation, namely, Arabic words that are semantically complex; for example, in the Verses 12 and 63 (table 10), these Ayahs represent an example of cultural untranslatability as it is absent from the lexicon and the culture of the target language (TL). Arberry in his translation borrowed the word "Gehenna" and however, Ali translated it as "Hell". Another example of semantic ambiguity lies in verse 12. The translation of some Qur'anic expressions may lose its value and the above verse is an example of semantic ambiguity due to the culture-bound terms. In this verse the word (bil-gaib) is translated as unseen.

4.6.4 Mistranslation losses

Losses sometimes occur due to mistranslating the verses; either because the translator has not read thoroughly through the exegesis books or because of lack of mastery of the authentic source language (SL). In this verse 6, mistranslation loss lies in the word (Litunzira) and the word (unzira). The first Arabic word is interpreted as admonish or warn that you may warn the people that if they will not follow the teachings of Islam then they might bear the consequences. But the second Arabic word is inferred as agree upon for the interpretation of the second Arabic word (unzira) that as "their forefathers were also warned". In this Noble Ayah, both Ali and Arberry render both words (Litunzira) and (unzira) as "warn and "admonish" and none of them explains what is the difference between (Litunzira) and (unzira). Consequently, the mentioned translators fail to convey the original meaning in this glorious verse.

CONCLUSION

After assessing the two English translations of Surah Ya-Sin by two translators, i.e., Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Arthur John Arberry, the researcher answered all three questions on which the research was made. Firstly, findings show that there exists the semantic loss in the translation of Surah Ya-Sin. Secondly, there are similarities and differences between the two translations which show that every language is different from the other in terms of vocabulary items, grammar, lexicons and more importantly difference in culture. Thirdly, Surah Ya-Sin is a type of religious discourse which consists of all three types of messages: social, moral and religious. Social message shows the relation of man with the society as there are different aspects of social life, i.e., authentic, eternal and universal. In moral message, there is a conflict between human moral values and status, i.e., man's relation with man. In this, the author conveys the idea or a suggestion to the reader. The third message shows the relation of man with God, i.e., religious message. It consists of man's faith in God and the author suggests the reader about religious beliefs.

This research has revealed that semantic loss in the English translation of Surah Ya-Sin exists. The loss occurs either completely or partially. However, partial loss tends to be more common than the complete loss. In addition, translators, sometimes, select words that is improper in their semantic fields. Such inaccuracy of selected vocabulary leads to a shift in meaning. Many non-equivalence problems were the causes for the semantic losses found in the translation of the Surah Ya-Sin in the translation of Arthur John Arberry in comparison with Abdullah Yusuf Ali. This research revealed that semantic loss occurs mainly because of cultural gaps; the Qur'anic language has its own lexicons that are culturally bound. Another cause is the translator's comparatively poor knowledge of the sciences of the Holy Qur'an. In this light, many approaches of translation such as literal translation and communicative or semantic translation have been used by translators. However, the former (literal translation approach) has been rejected because the Holy Qur'an cannot be translated literally, and the latter creates loss of meaning. Thus, in view of the complexities of the message conveyed in the Qur'an,

it seems reasonable to state that the only acceptable translation is the exegetical translation; one that is based on exegesis books, which will guide a translator in attaining accurate meaning of the target text (TT). Without full knowledge of the exegesis books, a translator will inevitably fail in translating the Holy Qur'an. In addition, translation of the Holy Qur'an should be carried out by a team of scholars, who are experts in the different branches of knowledge related to the Holy Qur'an.

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Biographies of Two Arabic Language Experts

Here is the biography of two PhD doctors who helped me in interpreting Qura'nic text. They mastered the Arabic language and written many Arabic reference books and also participated in Islamic International Conferences held at Egypt:

1. Dr. Sanaullah Rana Al-Azhari, PhD Al-Azhar University Cairo Egypt, Associate Professor Faculty of Arabic International Islamic University ISB. Chairman: Al-Karam Al-Azhar Wal Mujtabwi Foundation Islamabad. Thank you very much for your guidance, patience, concern, and critical advice.
2. MS. Zainab (Assistant Professor, of Humanities Department COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) Islamabad Campus), also helped me in interpretation of Qur'anic verses. Thanks for your time and concern.